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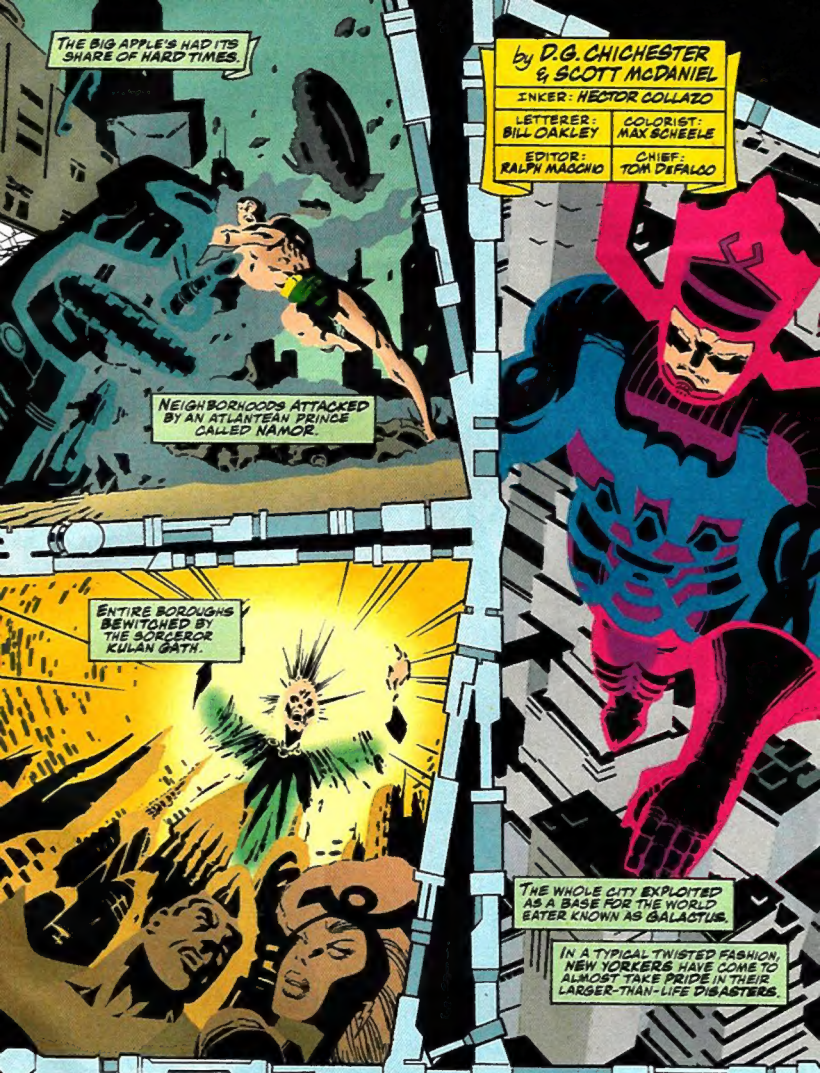

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ON TUESDAY NIGHT, AT 11:49 PM, THE STATEN ISLAND FERRY EXPLODES.
COMPARED TO ALIEN INVADERS AND BARBAROUS MAGIC, IT ALMOST SEEMS MUNDANE.
TREE of KNOWLEDGE - part two
SYSTEM ERROR
"The suddenness of the leap from hardware to software cannot but produce a period of anarchy . . ."
–Marshall McLuhan
TELL THAT TO THE FAMILIES OF THE 33 PEOPLE LOST IN THE BLAST... TELL THE RELATIVES OF THE 17 WHO DIE IN THE ICY WATER.
TELL THE INJURED FACING MONTHS OF INTENSIVE CARE AND PHYSICAL THERAPY.
THE MAN IN THE STREET HAS A NEW REASON TO BE AFRAID.
AND A MAN WITHOUT FEAR HAS A NEW FIGHT FOR JUSTICE.

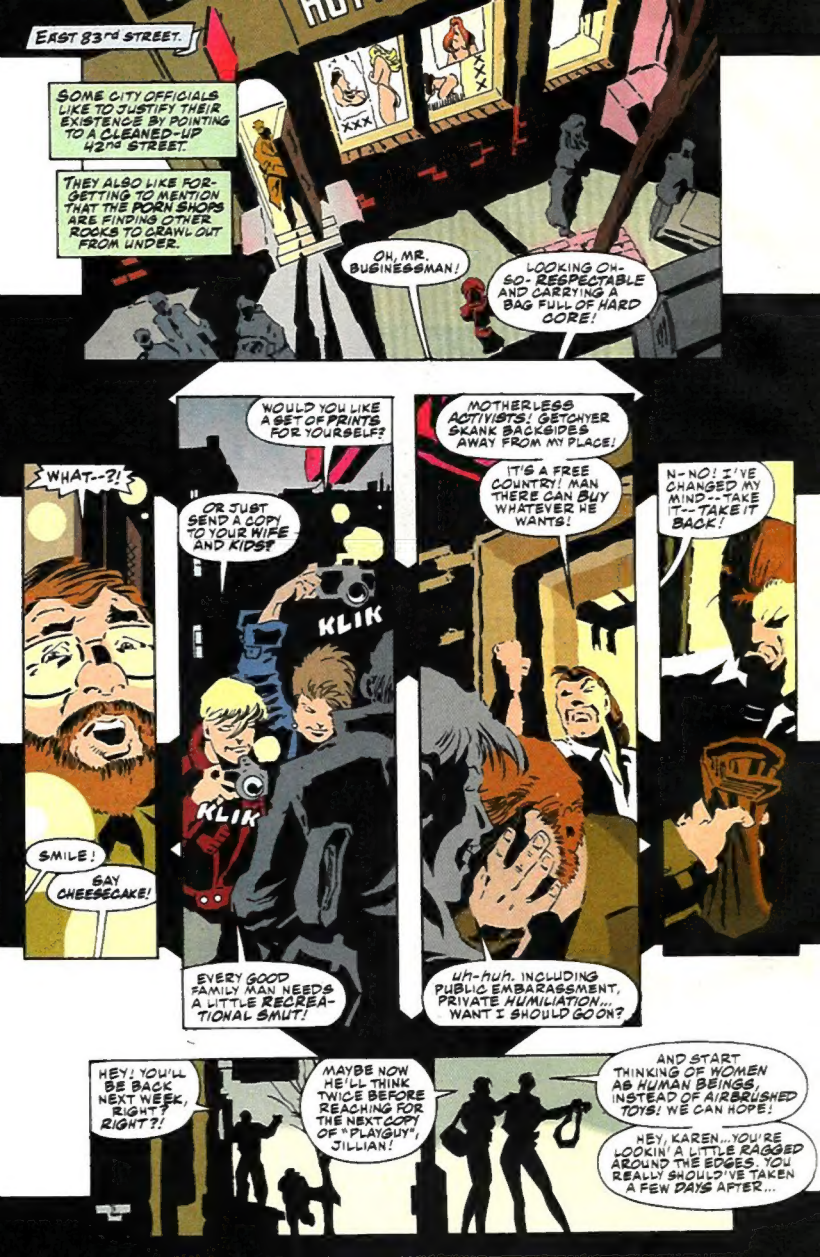
HEAT BAKES HYPERSENSITIVE SKIN, DISORIENTING.
DAREDEVIL'S MIND REELS BACK.
MINUTES BEFORE, AT THE FERRY TERMINAL.
TRACKING A COMPUTER HACKER KNOWN AS COBOL CHARLIE--
--A LOWLIFE LINK TO A HI-TECH GRIFTER CALLED KNOWBOT.
--CALL SOON'S YOU GET THIS MESSAGE, SPECTRUM! I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WERE IN ON THIS BIZ WITH KNOWBOT--
--BUT ME, I'M G-GONNA TRY AN' CUT A DEAL WITH THESE PEOPLE! GET OUT WITH AT LEAST MY BACKSIDE IN ONE PIECE!
KNOWBOT SOLD COMPUTER BLACK BOXES USED IN CREDIT CARD SCAMS AND CASH MACHINE RIP OFFS.
THAT WAS ENOUGH TO GET DAREDEVIL'S BACK UP.
BUT IT DIDN'T EXPLAIN COBOL'S ANXIOUS BODY LANGUAGE...OR THE SCENT OF DREAD IN HIS SWEAT.
THE ANSWER WAS DOWN AMONG THE SMOKE AND THE FLAMES.
AND THE SCREAMS.

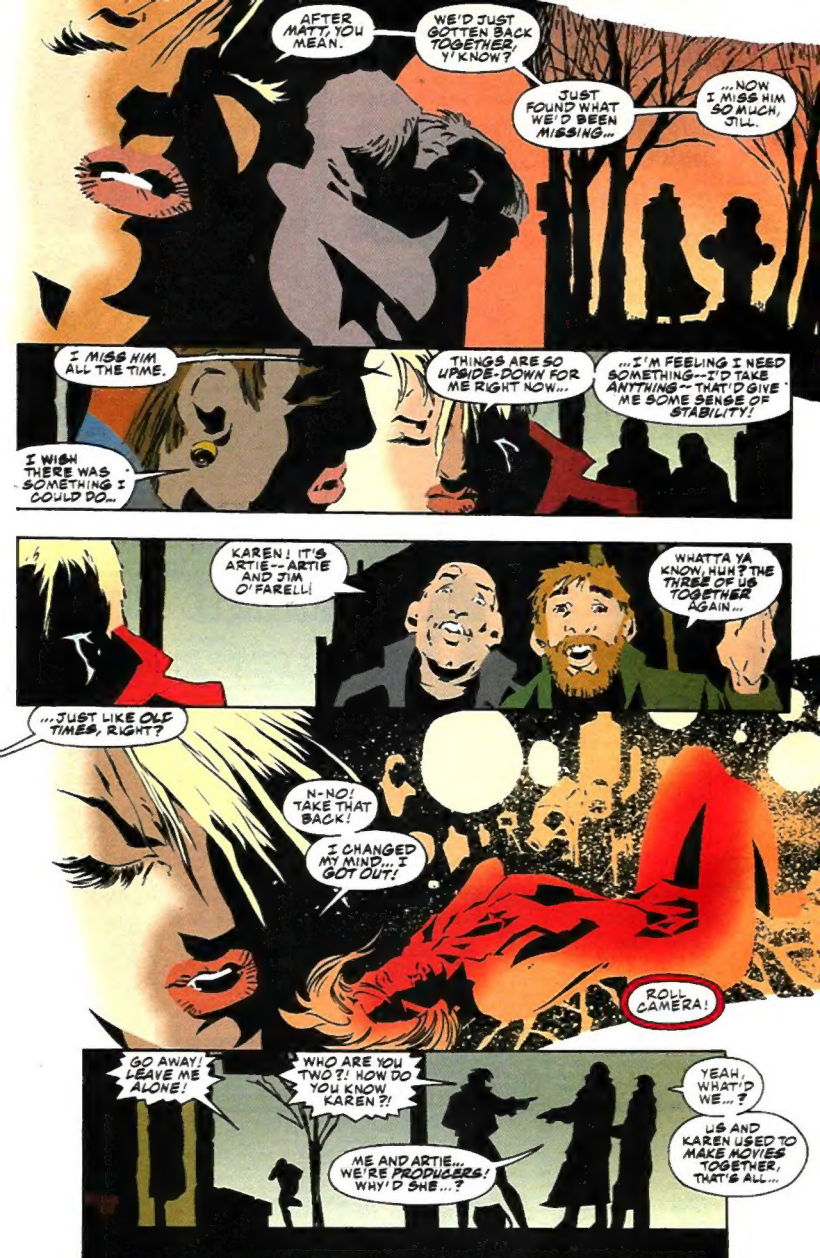
BOYHOOD HEROICS BLINDED MATT MURDOCK--
--THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK--
--BUT ENHANCED HIS OTHER SENSES IN RETURN. THEY FIND THE WOMAN--
DOWN!
ROLL!
--FOLLOWING A TRAIL OF BURNING CLOTH AND CHOKING WHIMPERS.
WHA-- WHAT'S HAPPENED...? TH' MIDGET... ARGUIN'...
...THAT KID WIT' THE HAIR... AN' THEN...
THAT'S WHAT THIS IS FOR! IT'S SIMPLE -- HERE YOU DIE -- THERE YOU LIVE!
DON' LIKE... TH' WATER... CAN'T SWIM...
NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY THAT ABOUT THE HUDSON...
SKRAK
NOT EVERYONE HAS THE BENEFIT OF A LIFE PRESERVER.
NOW THEY DO.
IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.

NOW I... LIKE TH' WATER... EVEN LESS...
AUGMENTED HEARING FOCUSES PAST CHURNING WATER AND ROARING FIRE.
TUNING IN VOICES, BOTH SCARED AND ANGRY.
I--I DIDN'T KNOW, BITMAP!
INTERNAL "RADAR" MAPS THE FIGURES.
YOU IDIOT, COBOL! YOU COULD'VE GOTTEN UG KILLED!
IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BLOW UNTIL THE MORNING RUSH HOUR!
CAN'T BLAME ME, BITMAP! YOU SCREWED UP THE TIMER!
BECAUSE I WAS INTERFERED WITH! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE, PHONE PHREAK!
THANKS FOR SCORIN' US--THE FLOAT--RED-MAN!
SHOW IT BY HELPING THOSE OTHERS ON BOARD!
AND KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANYONE ELSE WHO NEEDS--
IT'S STILL NASTY ENOUGH, AIN'T IT? LOOK, ALL I WANTED WAS A FAIR SHAKE FOR HELPIN' YOU PEOPLE OUT!
AFRAID WHAT HAPPENED TO KNOWBOT MIGHT HAPPEN TO YOU?
WELL... YEAH!
SLLKGG
GYEAAK
DON'T BE! FAT BOY COMPUTER GEEK WENT SO QUICK HE PROB-ABLY DIDN'T FEEL A THING!
BUT YOU...
...WELL, I HEAR MY LI'L LOVE HUG'S REAL PAINFUL!

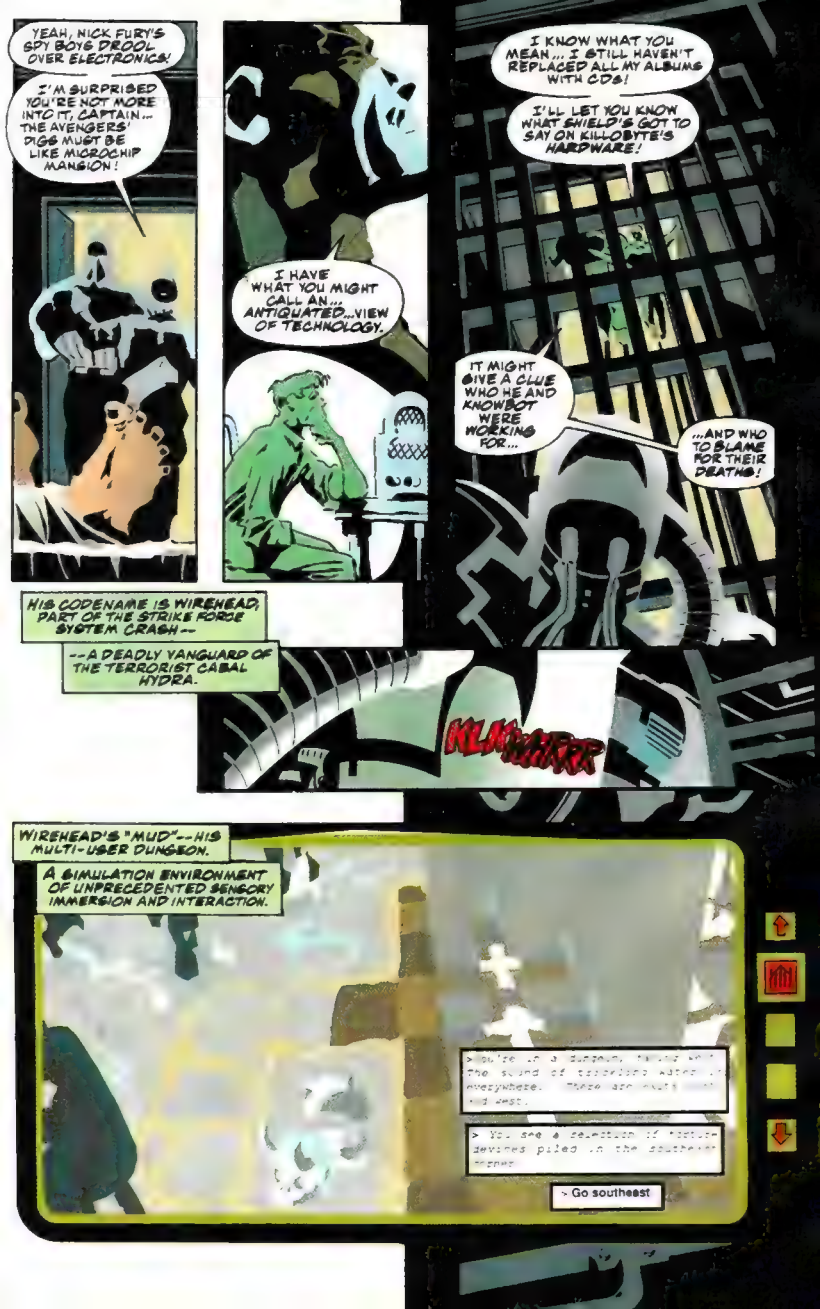
BATTLE-HARDENED MUSCLES CARRY DAREDEVIL QUICKLY THROUGH THE CHILL WET--
WHAT'S THE HURRY, RED?
YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
--UNTIL A THUNDER OF NOISE SCRAMBLES HIS SENSES, STOPPING HIM COLD.
THE SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL!
REMAIN CALM! WE WILL PROVIDE ASSISTANCE!
THEY ARE SIMPLY THE AVENGERS.
CHAMPIONS BALANCING THE SCALES ON A MAGNITUDE DIFFICULT FOR THE EVERYDAY MAN TO GRASP.
GIANT MAN STEADIES THE SINKING FERRY.
THE ANDROID CALLED "THE VISION" TURNS INTANGIBLE, SLIPPING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE TO CHECK FOR VICTIMS.
CRYSTAL--AN "INHUMAN" CHARGED WITH ELEMENTAL POWERS--FORCES WAVES TO MOVE THE SURVIVORS TO SHORE.

I HAVE TO GET BACK OUT THERE! THERE'S A KILLER--
DAREDEVIL, HUH? "KILLER" LOOK YOU'VE GOT THERE YOURSELF...VERY AGGRESSIVE.
LET ME THROUGH, BLACK KNIGHT!
CHECK YOUR HORNS AT THE DOOR, VIGILANTE--THIS IS AVENGERS BUSINESS NOW!
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE PEOPLE!
YOU BETTER, HERO!
OR I'LL BE BACK TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
SOMEWHERE REEKING OF MACHIAVELLIAN EVIL.
YOU'RE WATCHING WFET NEWS--
--SELF-PROCLAIMED "INFORMATIONAL" TERRORISTS, THE "SILICON PIRATES" HAVE TAKEN CREDIT FOR THE BOMBING!
WITH THE BEAST THAT IS BARON WOLFGANG VON STRUCKER.
I'M WATCHING PAWNS OF HYDRA, ACTING OUT MY GAMBIT!
WELCOME TO THE FUTURE, NEW YORK...
KLIK


EAST 83rd STREET.
SOME CITY OFFICIALS LIKE TO JUSTIFY THEIR EXISTENCE BY POINTING TO A CLEANED-UP 42nd STREET.
THEY ALSO LIKE FORGETTING TO MENTION THAT THE PORN SHOPS ARE FINDING OTHER ROOKS TO CRAWL OUT FROM UNDER.
XXX
XXX
OH, MR. BUSINESSMAN!
LOOKING OH-SO- RESPECTABLE AND CARRYING A BAG FULL OF HARD CORE!
WHAT--?!
WOULD YOU LIKE A SET OF PRINTS FOR YOURSELF?
OR JUST SEND A COPY TO YOUR WIFE AND KIDS?
KLIK
KLIK
SMILE!
SAY CHEESECAKE!
EVERY GOOD FAMILY MAN NEEDS A LITTLE RECREATIONAL SMUT!
MOTHERLESS ACTIVISTS! GETCHYER SKANK BACKSIDES AWAY FROM MY PLACE!
IT'S A FREE COUNTRY! MAN THERE CAN BUY WHATEVER HE WANTS!
uh-huh. INCLUDING PUBLIC EMBARASSMENT, PRIVATE HUMILIATION... WANT I SHOULD GO ON?
N-NO! I'VE CHANGED MY MIND--TAKE IT--TAKE IT BACK!
HEY! YOU'LL BE BACK NEXT WEEK, RIGHT? RIGHT?!
MAYBE NOW HE'LL THINK TWICE BEFORE REACHING FOR THE NEXT COPY OF "PLAYGUY", JILLIAN!
AND START THINKING OF WOMEN AS HUMAN BEINGS INSTEAD OF AIRBRUSHED TOYS! WE CAN HOPE!
HEY, KAREN... YOU'RE LOOKIN' A LITTLE RAGGED AROUND THE EDGES. YOU REALLY SHOULD'VE TAKEN A FEW DAYS AFTER...


AFTER MATT, YOU MEAN.
WE'D JUST GOTTEN BACK TOGETHER, Y' KNOW?
JUST FOUND WHAT WE'D BEEN MISSING...
...NOW I MISS HIM SO MUCH, JILL.
I MISS HIM ALL THE TIME.
I WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD DO...
THINGS ARE SO UPSIDE-DOWN FOR ME RIGHT NOW...
...I'M FEELING I NEED SOMETHING--I'D TAKE ANYTHING-- THAT'D GIVE ME SOME SENSE OF STABILITY!
KAREN! IT'S ARTIE--ARTIE AND JIM O'FARELL!
WHATTA YA KNOW, HUH? THE THREE OF US TOGETHER AGAIN...
...JUST LIKE OLD TIMES, RIGHT?
N-NO! TAKE THAT BACK!
I CHANGED MY MIND... I GOT OUT!
ROLL CAMERA!
GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE!
WHO ARE YOU TWO?! HOW DO YOU KNOW KAREN?!
ME AND ARTIE... WE'RE PRODUCERS! WHY'D SHE...?
YEAH, WHAT'D WE...?
US AND KAREN USED TO MAKE MOVIES TOGETHER, THAT'S ALL...

BELLEVUE HOSPITAL.
THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES YOUR CRACKDOWN ON KNOWBOT'S HACKING FEDERAL COMPUTERS, CAPTAIN!
THE ELECTROCUTED BODIES OF THE COMPUTER CRIMINAL, KNOWBOT, AND AN OUTLAW ENFORCER NAMED KILLOBYTE.
THE STILL-LIVING FIGURES OF SUPER-SOLDIER CAPTAIN AMERICA AND FEDERAL PROSECUTOR KATHY MALPER.
THE GOVERNMENT'S GOT ENOUGH TROUBLE SETTING UP AN INFORMATION HIGHWAY--
--WITHOUT CROOKS LIKE FAT BOY HERE CLOGGING UP THE LANES!
THAT'S A BIT HARSH, MISS MALPER.
GOTTA CALL 'EM LIKE I SEE 'EM, SOLDIER. THEY DON'T CALL ME "THE DRAGON LADY" FOR NOTHIN'!
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T FIND OUT WHO HE WAS STEALING MATERIAL FOR...
...AND I'M SORRY I COULDN'T PREVENT KILLOBYTE FROM DOING WHAT HE DID TO KNOWBOT AND HIMSELF.
I'D LIKE A S.H.I.E.L.D. FORENSICS TEAM TO REVIEW THE NATURE OF KILLOBYTE'S GEAR.



YEAH, NICK FURY'S SPY BOYS DROOL OVER ELECTRONICS!

I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT MORE INTO IT, CAPTAIN... THE AVENGERS' DIGS MUST BE LIKE MICROCHIP MANSION!

I HAVE WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL AN... ANTIQUATED...VIEW OF TECHNOLOGY.

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN... I STILL HAVEN'T REPLACED ALL MY ALBUMS WITH CDS!

I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHAT SHIELD'S GOT TO SAY ON KILLOBYTE'S HARDWARE!

IT MIGHT GIVE A CLUE WHO HE AND KNOWBOT WERE WORKING FOR...

...AND WHO TO BLAME FOR THEIR DEATHS!

HIS CODENAME IS WIREHEAD, PART OF THE STRIKE FORCE SYSTEM CRASH--

--A DEADLY VANGUARD OF THE TERRORIST CABAL HYDRA.

KLIKWHRRR

WIREHEAD'S "MUD"--HIS MULTI-USER DUNGEON.

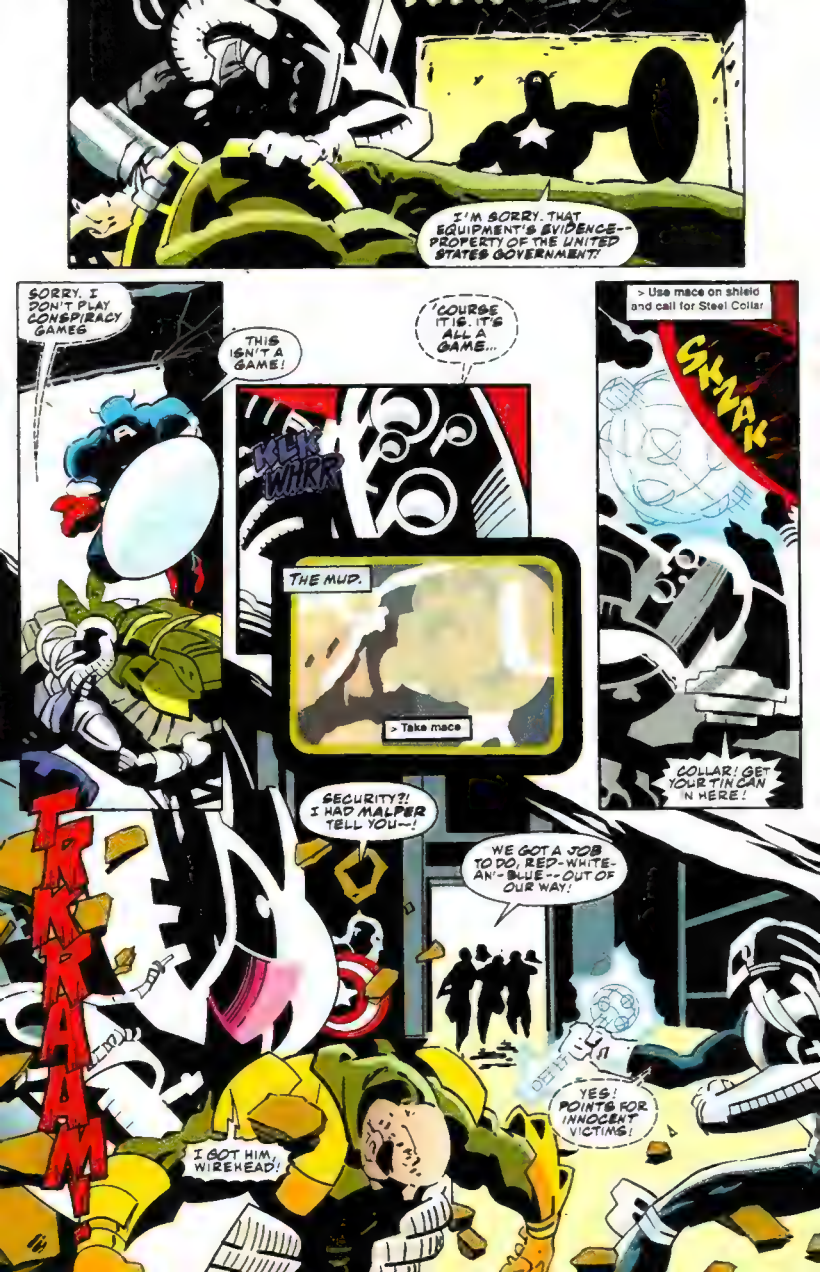
A SIMULATION ENVIRONMENT OF UNPRECEDENTED SENSORY IMMERSION AND INTERACTION.

> You're in a dungeon, [illegible] the sound of trickling water [illegible] everywhere. There are exits [illegible] and west.

> You see a selection of torture devices piled in the southeast corner.

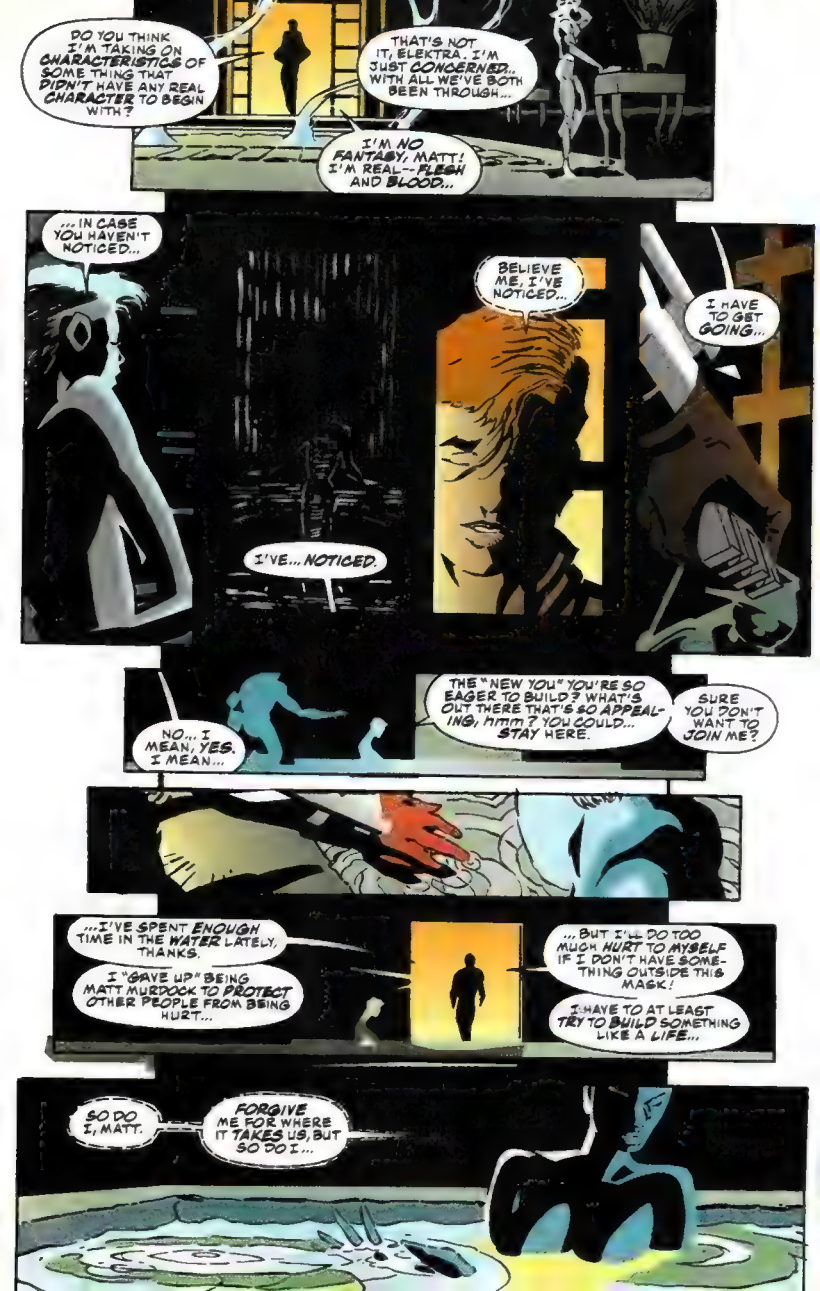
> Go southeast

> Take sword.
> You take the sword. It feels good in your hand.
> Use sword on grate.
LISTEN...
I DON'T HEAR--
THERE'S SOMEONE BACK IN THE MORGUE!
SHOULD I CALL SECURITY?
YES.
TELL THEM TO STAY BACK.


I'M SORRY. THAT EQUIPMENT'S EVIDENCE--PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT!
SORRY, I DON'T PLAY CONSPIRACY GAMES
THIS ISN'T A GAME!
'COURSE IT IS. IT'S ALL A GAME...
KLK WHRR
THE MUD.
> Take mace
> Use mace on shield and call for Steel Collar
SKNAK
COLLAR! GET YOUR TIN CAN N HERE!
SECURITY?! I HAD MALPER TELL YOU--!
WE GOT A JOB TO DO, RED-WHITE-AN'-BLUE--OUT OF OUR WAY!
TRKAAM
I GOT HIM, WIREHEAD!
YES! POINTS FOR INNOCENT VICTIMS!

IN THE MUD.
> Take plasma rifle.
IN THE MORGUE.
ZKROOM
ZKROOM
THIS IS--THIS IS CRAZY!
WHAT'D YA EXPECT? IT'S BELLEVUE!
KRTOOM
MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU'LL LISTEN!
HOW'D YOU DO W REHEAD?
A NEW HIGH SCORE! LET'S GO, COULAR!
THE SOLDIER'S BODY SCREAMS IN PROTEST--
--THE SERUM THAT ONCE REFINED HIS MUSCLES NOW A POISON.
CAPTAIN AMERICA PRESSES ON PAST THE FATIGUE AND PAIN...
...HIS DETERMINATION REWARDED ONLY BY FRUSTRATION.
NO SIGN!
YOUR "FRIENDS" THOUGHT YOU WERE IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO COME AFTER YOUR CORPSE, KILLOBYTE.
AND THAT MAKES YOUR FRIENDS IMPORTANT TO ME...

TRIBECA.
THE ROOFTOP GARDEN AND DOJO BELONGING TO THE NATCHIOS' ESTATE.
ELEKTRA ATTACKS WITH THE DEADLY SKILL SHE LEARNED AS AN ASSASSIN-FOR-HIRE.
THE TARGET SHE SEES BEFORE HER IS THE STAR OF THE CHASTE--
--THE NINJA CLAN THAT TOOK HER IN WHEN SHE'D FINALLY CLEANSED HERSELF OF HER SINISTER PAST.
THE SAME CHASTE THAT COLDLY REJECTED HER WHEN SHE'D BEEN FORCED TO TAKE THAT DARK HALF BACK INTO HERSELF.
YOU USED ERYNYS' SAI.
WHAT?
THE TRAINING DUMMY. YOU USED ERYNYS' SAI.
DON'T SPEAK OF HER LIKE SHE DESERVED IDENTITY, MATT!
ERYNYS WAS INHUMAN--ANIMATED WITH A MALIGNANT SCRAP OF MY PSYCHE I THOUGH I'D SEEN THE LAST OF!


DO YOU THINK I'M TAKING ON CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME THING THAT DIDN'T HAVE ANY REAL CHARACTER TO BEGIN WITH?
THAT'S NOT IT, ELEKTRA. I'M JUST CONCERNED... WITH ALL WE'VE BOTH BEEN THROUGH...
I'M NO FANTASY, MATT! I'M REAL--FLESH AND BLOOD...
...IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED...
BELIEVE ME, I'VE NOTICED...
I HAVE TO GET GOING...
I'VE... NOTICED.
NO... I MEAN, YES. I MEAN...
THE "NEW YOU" YOU'RE SO EAGER TO BUILD? WHAT'S OUT THERE THAT'S SO APPEALING, HMM? YOU COULD... STAY HERE.
SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO JOIN ME?
...I'VE SPENT ENOUGH TIME IN THE WATER LATELY, THANKS.
I "GAVE UP" BEING MATT MURDOCK TO PROTECT OTHER PEOPLE FROM BEING HURT...
... BUT I'LL DO TOO MUCH HURT TO MYSELF IF I DON'T HAVE SOMETHING OUTSIDE THIS MASK!
I HAVE TO AT LEAST TRY TO BUILD SOMETHING LIKE A LIFE...
SO DO I, MATT.
FORGIVE ME FOR WHERE IT TAKES US, BUT SO DO I...

14TH STREET, MANHATTAN.
THERE ARE BARGAINS TO BE FOUND ALONG THIS STRETCH OF GRUNGE THAT RUNS FROM 5TH TO 8TH AVENUE...
...IF YOU CAN DODGE THE RIP-OFFS LOOKING TO FEED ON NIAVE SOULS.
GOOD LUCK.
THEY CALL ME THE "PRICE CHOPPER"--
--CHOPPIN' PRICES ON HIGH TICKET MERCHANDISE!
W 14TH
TOW AWAY ZONE
THE CAMCORDER... DOES IT COME WITH A WARRANTY?
ALL ORIGINAL MATERIALS IN THE BOX, CUZ! QUALITY GOODS, STILL SHRINK WRAPPED...
...FOR YOUR PROTECTION!
"IT IS A GOOD DEAL...
GOOD IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH!
YOU WANT A GREAT DEAL, PAL, YOU COME TO OL' JACK BATLIN!
LOOKING FOR A CAMCORDER, HUH? FAMILY GET-TOGETHERS? SPORTING EVENTS? MAYBE YOU AN' THE LI'L WOMAN, Hmm?
GOT JUST THE THING RIGHT HERE!

MESS WITH MY RACKET, CUZ, I'LL MESS YOU UP!
CALM DOWN, PAL... IT'S A GREAT SCAM, PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH OF US!
WHERE D'YA GET YOUR "GOODS"?
THAT SPECTRUM HONEY--
--HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
LISTEN, CUZ-- LAMAR, RIGHT? I BEEN UPFRONT WITH YOU-- AN HONEST BUSINESSMAN, TRYIN' TO MAKE AN HONEST BUCK!
AD VENATUM VADAMUS.
HUH?
CUT TO THE CHASE.
WHAT'S SMILIN' SUNGLASSES AN' HIS BAD HAIRCUT SELLIN'? A TORN UP OL' BOX, COULD BE FULL O' NOTHIN'!
'COURSE, WITH THE PRICE CHOPPER, YOU GET QUALITY GOODS, STILL SHRINK-WRAPPED...
FOR YOUR PROTECTION, MAN'S GOT A POINT, LAMAR...
SLTHHT
...AND A SALE IS A SALE! HERE YOU GO...
TRMMBRKK

B-BRICKS?
NOT JUST ANY BRICKS! SHRINK-WRAPPED ...FOR YOUR PROTECTION!
PRICE CHOPPER-- "CUZ"! WHAT'S THE HURRY?
GOING OUT OF BUSINESS? I MIGHT WANT TO TAKE OVER THE FRANCHISE!
WHERE CAN I FIND THAT "SPECTRUM HONEY" SUPPLIED THE EMPTY BOXES?
GET OFFA ME, YOU SONUVA--
--URRG--
--SHE HANGS OUT IN SOHO, ALL RIGHT?! BROOME STREET-- ASK AROUND, SHE'S GREEDY. SHE'LL TURN UP!
I SHOULD THANK YOU FOR YOUR HONESTY...
BYE-BYE! SHOP AGAIN SOON!
NOT THAT HONEST, LAMAR...
...PRICE CHOPPER'S WALLET. AND YOUR CASH!
CAVEAT EMPTOR. "BUYER BEWARE"!
YOU'RE A CON MAN, TOO?
I PREFER "SOCIAL ENGINEER"!
HMMM... AVARITIA BONA EST! "GREED IS GOOD"!
STILL, YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME FIND SOME WAY TO REPAY YOU, MR. BATUN...
SOME OTHER TIME.
RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT TO SEE A LADY ABOUT SOME ELECTRONICS...

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM'S LOFT.
BROOME STREET.
--SOON'S YOU GET THIS MESSAGE, SPECTRUM, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WERE IN ON THIS BIZ WITH KNOWBOT--
I WASN'T, COBOL 'CAUSE I'M NOWHERE NEAR AS FEEBLE-MINDED AS YOU!
BUT I WAS THERE WHEN HE FLATLINED...
...AND BELIEVE ME, THAT FEELING'S GOTTA BE WORSE THAN WHATEVER STUPIDITY THE TWO OF YOU WERE DOWN WITH!
JUST IN CASE, THOUGH...CAN'T HURT TO CLEAR OUT FOR A WHILE!
YOU HAVE LOGGED INTO THE LAGUARDIA AIRPORT TICKETING NETWORK.
ACCESS IS RESTRICTED TO EMPLOYEES OF--
UH-HUH, YEAH. LET'S SEE ...MEXICO MIGHT BE NICE!
YOU MAY HAVE TO SETTLE FOR THE FEDERAL PENITENTIARY AT MARION.
KNOWBOT, YOU IDIOT...
...WHAT'VE YOU GOTTEN ME INTO?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FORMALLY CHARGED IN KNOWBOT'S DEATH...
...AND, TO BE HONEST, THIS ISN'T AN OFFICIAL INQUIRY INTO THE MATTER!
BUT I DO HAVE SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR FRIEND'S CONSPIRATORS. I'D APPRECIATE--
SOME FLAG-WEARING STORMTROOPER BREAKS INTO MY PLACE AND I'M SUPPOSED TO DO ANYTHING BUT SCREAM?!

DAREDEVIL'S TRACED SPECTRUM, HOPING HER TIES TO COBOL CHARLIE MIGHT PROVIDE A LINK TO THE TERRORISTS.
CALM DOWN, MISS! I'M NOT HERE TO STRONG-ARM--
GET YOUR HAND OFF OF ME!
THE BLIND MAN DOESN'T KNOW WHY 240 POUNDS OF MUSCLE ARE CLAMPING DOWN ON 95 POUNDS OF TEENAGER...
ENOUGH OF THAT!
...BUT HE KNOWS HE'S GOING TO PUT A STOP TO IT.
I'M NOT USED TO TAKING ORDERS!
I'VE NOTICED THAT ABOUT YOU AVENGER-TYPES!
FAST REFLEXES!
RADAR ECHOES, PAINTING STROBE-LIKE IMAGES INSIDE DAREDEVIL'S HEAD.
NOT FAST ENOUGH.
THIS FRISBEE'S--
--THAN IT LOOKS!
NEXT TIME TRY WHEN I DON'T SEE IT COMING!
--HEAVIER--
SIX MONTHS WITHOUT A DATE... NOW THIS! LUCKY ME...
THIS ISN'T YOUR CONCERN, DAREDEVIL --OR WHOEVER YOU ARE!
I SUGGEST YOU LEAVE... BEFORE I'M FORCED TO ESCORT YOU OUT!

YOU WANT TO DANCE WITH ME, SOLDIER-BOY?
LET'S GO...
NEXT: AN EXTRA-SPECIAL "TREE OF KNOWLEDGE" STORY: "APPREHENSIONS"! IN THIRTY...

Ralph Macchio: idiot
Matt Idelson: asst. idiot

Hiya! Lately, we've been running a different format letters page. As you can tell by now, that format didn't exactly yield stellar results, but you can't blame us for trying! Beginning next issue, we'll be trying something a little different. Also, we're gonna start reprinting the best of the letters that were obscured by the background art over the last few months. In the meantime, send all your comments to:

REDLINES
c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Ave. South
New York, New York 10016

(addresses will be withheld by request)

Dear DD team,

Now that the big storyline has ended, I thought I'd write and tell you how I liked it. I like it. Not loved (more on that later), but I enjoyed it a lot and found it entertaining, and that's the bottom line, isn't it? That, and the fact that, from what I understand, you've brought a lot of new readers to DD, and both the book and the character deserve it. Congrats. Now, on to some specific points.

1) The new costume. It's not a *bad* costume, exactly, but I have to agree with the letter writer who felt that the red suit fit the whole devil thing better (I should also admit that a dozen or so years of looking at the red costume kind of got me accustomed to it). But, to your credit, the protective qualities of the new outfit make sense. Any chance he could keep it and just dye it red or something?

2) Gimmicks. I think you're already planning to steer clear of gimmick covers in the future, so I'll focus on the guest stars. By your own admission, Venom's appearance was gratuitous, and I felt the same way about Morbius's (and on a sidenote: Siege--do we really need another cyborg killing machine?). But I think you did it to bring in new readers and it seems to have worked, so I'll let it go. Still, in the future, try to stick to characters who fit smoothly into the story (Cap next issue sounds like a good example), and remember that too many guest stars can hurt a story if things become too cluttered.

3) Elektra. It's too early for me to figure her out, what with all the fragments of her psyche floating around, but since it looks like she's somewhat together now, I'll just advise you to keep her overall character and inner conflicts consistent with the way she's been portrayed in the past.

4) Matt Murdock. A few things. One, I hope DD has the decency to at least tell people like Foggy, Karen and others that he's alive. Two, Matt Murdock provided a "normal human" side to DD's larger-than-life exploits; as a blind man, he showed that you can overcome adversity, and as a lawyer he showed that sometimes, you can work within the system. Please try to continue some of these themes with DD's new identity. Three, I'll miss him.

5) Don't bring back Hellspawn or any of the other folks who died this issue (except maybe Matt). It would cheapen a good story in which all those bullets flying around actually had some lasting consequences. Do, however, bring back Garrett--I liked the way he was handled a lot.

6) Yes, your letters page is hard to read but at least it's not as bad as the Avengers'. One word: BOLD!

7) It's clear to me you guys love this book and enjoy what you're doing. Keep it up and I'll stick around. Thanks for the time.

Chris Gage
N. Grafton, MA

Seems like the current direction of the book suits you, Chris. You're right, we do love Daredevil and the endless possibilities that his characters (and cast) present. We took a poll and Dan, Scott, and Hector all promised that the best is definitely still to come. As for your points,

1) The costume change was designed to help Matt fool his friends and foes into believing a new man inhabits the suit. Changing the suit to red would also make it a lot more noticeable, and these days, Matt's trying to stay out of the limelight.

2) "Gimmick" covers are often used to either mark an important issue or raise interest in a book, or sometimes both. Now that DAREDEVIL is firmly implanted in the world's consciousness, we'll only be using special covers to denote special issues, if even then.

3) You're not the only one reserving judgment on the return of Elektra--Matt himself is a little bit uncertain how to act around his former flame. As time goes on, both he and you will come to understand her a little better.

4) Matt probably won't be revealing his identity anytime soon, especially to his loved ones (sans Maggie). DD will be spending time with an all-new supporting cast which will, at the very least, intrigue you.

5) Not to worry, Chris. Hellspawn is dead, dead, dead, and dead he may stay.

6) Redlines, Avengers Assemble!, and Fantastic Forum all took an unscheduled trip to the dermatologist. As you can see, things have cleared up quite a bit.

Dear Redlines,

Thank you very much for what you've done to the character that introduced me into the "super" hero comics genre. I gave up on Mr. Murdock a few years ago, because I simply lost interest. Now, I'm back to stay. Another thank you for bringing back my all-time favorite comic book character, Elektra. The woman from Greece with the deadly moves and beautiful body. I always wondered what happened to her after the last page of THE ELEKTRA SAGA, when she wore the white robes on the mountainside.

DD's new costume is fantastic. Some say the Man without Fear shouldn't wear body armor. What could be more confidence-inspiring than impervious armor that still lets you operate to full potential?

The extending billy club is awesome and symbolic. This sort of stick reflects the old Daredevil. The grappling hook, a blind man's cane. A bo staff as a tribute to his mentor.

You've brought Stone and Elektra back to us, and I've loved them both. SO, how about bringing back everyone's favorite pool shark, Stick? We need to hear more of his "redneck zen" advice to the red man. You don't have to bring him back to life, just maybe an astral plane phantom appearance, or in one of DD's dreams or Elektra's meditations.

I will miss Matt Murdock. I've always had something for the blind lawyer character, fighting to defend a system he didn't always believe in.

I'm very excited about the new name, Jack Batlin paying tribute to his boxing father and maybe also reflecting DD's new fighting spirit. Please, have more appearances by Sister Magie, with a whole new life. Matt needs all the family around him he has.

Let's see more of Elektra. Keep her around for a while longer. Please think about Stick. It can only get better from here.

J.R. Sharp
(Address withheld by request)

Sorry, J.R., but Stick probably won't be making an appearance from the astral plane. Unlike sorcerers (i.e., the Ancient One), Stick was a warrior with his own beliefs and limitations which would prevent him from reaching a higher plane of existence after corporeal death.

You raise several interesting points concerning the symbolism of the "new" Daredevil. The changes Matt has undergone are still connected to his past, thereby creating an ongoing link between past, present and future. That being the case, it would hardly do to resurrect Stick when Matt has finally become the warrior Stick dreamed of.

NEXT ISSUE: The assault on New York continues, this time at the Empire State Building. Guest creative team Greg Wright, Sergio Carrielo, and Ariane Lenshoek do the honors as DD teams up with Silver Sable to fend off a terrorist attack at NYC's greatest landmark.